

**Statement on the Bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, Iraq
February 22, 2006**

On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest condolences to the people of Iraq for the brutal bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, one of the holiest sites in Shi'a Islam. The terrorists in Iraq have again proven that they are enemies of all faiths and of all humanity. The world must stand united against them and steadfast behind the people of Iraq. This senseless crime is an affront to people of faith throughout the world. The United States condemns this cowardly act in the strongest possible terms.

I ask all Iraqis to exercise restraint in the wake of this tragedy and to pursue justice in accordance with the laws and Constitution of Iraq. Violence will only contribute to what the terrorists sought to achieve by this act.

The United States stands ready to do all in its power to assist the Government of Iraq to identify and bring to justice those responsible for this terrible act. And the American people pledge to work with the people of Iraq to rebuild and restore the Golden Mosque of Samarra to its former glory.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on Extending Generalized System of
Preferences Benefits to Liberia
February 22, 2006**

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am writing to inform you of my intent to add Liberia to the list of beneficiary developing countries and to the list of least-developed beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). I have carefully considered the criteria identified in sections 501 and 502 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended. In light of these criteria, I have determined that it is appropriate to end the suspension of Liberia as a GSP beneficiary developing country and to extend least-developed ben-

eficiary developing country benefits to Liberia.

This notice is submitted in accordance with section 502(f) of the Trade Act of 1974.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The related proclamation of February 22 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report Relating to the Interdiction of Aircraft Engaged in Illicit Drug Trafficking February 22, 2006

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the authorities relating to official immunity in the interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking (Public Law 107-108, 22 U.S.C. 2291-4), and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration. This report address-

es the matter of assistance for interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Interview With Indian Journalists February 22, 2006

The President. Quick statement—I'll be glad to answer questions. I am really looking forward to my trip. It's the first trip to India for me and my wife. We had a great dinner here with the Prime Minister. I found him to be a very decent, honorable person with whom we established warm relations. And he—I just can't tell you how—what a kind person he was and, at the same time, represented his great country's interests very well.

I do want to make something clear in the speech I gave today. I said that—as to the Kashmir interest—issue, America supports a solution that is acceptable to all sides. As you might recall, in my remarks, I said, “to both sides.” I would like the record to be so that the world hears me say, “all sides.” I fully understand that the deal has to be acceptable to the Indians, Paks, as well as the citizens of Kashmir.

Okay?

India-U.S. Relations

Q. Yes. Mr. President, how and why has India come front and center to U.S. stra-

tegic thinking now after being on the margins for so many years?

The President. Well, as you know, there was a history, particularly during the cold war, that made it difficult for our countries to establish a close relationship. However, things change in the world. And as the post-cold war thaw developed, as—attitudes began to shift.

Secondly, the Indian economy, as a result of more transparency and openness and trade, began to change. And as the Indian economy changed, it changed the commercial relationship between the United States and India.

Thirdly, there are some common threats that make it in our interests to work together—namely terrorism. As I said in my speech today, the United States has been attacked, but India certainly understands what it means to have suffering as a result of terrorist activities. And so there's common interests that have helped to change the relationship. And I intend to seize those interests, as does the Prime Minister, in order to foster what we've called a strategic relationship.